

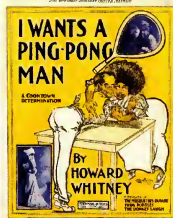
Hello, Frisco!

Ragtime Songs

Performed by Miss Ann Gibson with Frederick Hodges, piano

Notes on the Songs by Frederick Hodges

"I Wants A Ping Pong Man" Lyrics and Music by Howard Whitney
 Copyright 1903 by M. Witmark & Sons.



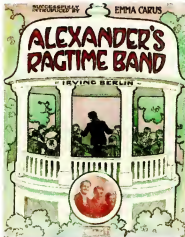
The world of coon songs is largely misunderstood today, but it bears noting that many of the best coon songs were written by Blacks for Black performers to sing in Black Vaudeville houses. Great Black composers such as Paul Laurence Dunbar, James Reese Europe, Rosamond Johnson, Will Marion Cook, and Ernest Hogan, to name but a few, wrote coon songs. Scott Joplin himself penned coon songs, including the original song version of "The Ragtime Dance." Still, many of the infamous and thunderous condemnations of ragtime as corrupt and immoral were really condemnations of the salty lyrics found in coon songs. "I Wants A Ping Pong Man" is among the mildest and most entertaining of coon songs, bristling with topical humor and genuine ragtime rhythms. It celebrates the growing popularity of ping pong, or table tennis. The game has its origins in England as an after-dinner amusement for upper-class Victorians in the 1880s. Mimicking the game of tennis in an indoor environment, everyday objects were originally enlisted to act as the equipment. It was not until the early 1900s that manufacturers standardized the ball and paddle and made them commercially available. The game was relatively new to the United States in 1904, but Whitney enjoyed spoofing it in his song by pretending that it had reached the Black communities and was now used as a measure of a man's fitness as a sulitor. Howard Whitney was a composer of little piano pieces and also contributed songs to a couple of Broadway musicals in 1904, *The Royal Chef* at the Lyric Theatre in New York and also to the flop *Flo-Flo*, starring Stella Mayhew.

"The Dance Of The Grizzly Bear" Lyrics by Irving Berlin and Music by George Botsford
 Copyright 1910 by Ted Snyder Co.



"The Dance Of The Grizzly Bear" started its life as "The Grizzly Bear Rag" piano solo by noted ragtime composer George Botsford, who was also a staff pianist at the publishing house of Ted Snyder Company. Its immediate popularity prompted publisher Ted Snyder to capitalize on the success of the piano rag by having his staff lyricist Irving Berlin write words for it. While the piano rag was merely an instrumental without any descriptive intent, Berlin's coon song lyrics logically describe the Grizzly Bear as one of the many animal dances that was sweeping the nation at this time. The grizzly bear dance appears to have originated in San Francisco, along with the Bunny Hug. In essence, it consisted of imitations of the movements of a dancing bear. In the Ziegfeld Follies of 1911, Fanny Brice danced the grizzly bear in a special production number titled "The Barbary Coast." The grizzly bear dance was frowned upon at society dances due to its unsophisticated gestures and low associations. On July 22, 1913, a dance card from the Exposition Park Dancing Pavilion in Conneaut Lake, Pennsylvania warned patrons that the "Bear Dance" and Turkey Trot would not be tolerated.

"Alexander's Ragtime Band" Lyrics and Music by Irving Berlin
 Copyright 1911 by Ted Snyder Co. Inc.



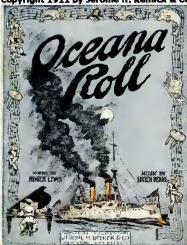
"Alexander's Ragtime Band" was the first big hit for Irving Berlin (1888-1989), earning him the title "The Ragtime King." The song became a national craze when the great Emma Carus performed it in Chicago. The song then spread across the country and sold over a million copies in just a matter of months. As wonderful as the song is, there is considerable controversy about its origins. Scott Joplin was convinced that Berlin stole the melody line of the verse from "A Real Slow Drag," a song from his opera Tremontisha, which he showed to Berlin at the Crown-Seminary-Snyder offices, where Berlin was working in 1911. Berlin kept the manuscript for quite a while before returning it to Joplin, declining the opportunity to publish the opera. Joplin was shocked a few months later when "Alexander's Ragtime Band" came out, crying "That's my tune!" Berlin, of course, denied any wrongdoing. Joplin was then forced to make slight revisions to "A Real Slow Drag" in order to avoid being charged with plagiarism in turn. These revisions notwithstanding, the similarities between the two songs remain striking. Whatever its origins, "Alexander's Ragtime Band" is terrific. Its enduring popularity was demonstrated in 1938 when Twentieth Century-Fox produced a hit musical film of the same name, starring Alice Faye and Tyrone Power. The film spun an elaborate and highly entertaining fiction about the origin of the song. Much like MGM's Easter Parade of 1949 and Twentieth Century Fox's There's No Business Like Show Business (1954), Alexander's Ragtime Band was largely a vehicle for Irving Berlin to license his early catalogue of songs — at tremendous cost — to Hollywood.

"Everybody's Doing It Now" Lyrics and Music by Irving Berlin
Copyright 1911 by Ted Snyder Co.



"Everybody's Doing It Now" is another of Irving Berlin's early hit songs that quickly became a standard. Purportedly about a couple who are eager to take a spin out on the dance floor to a snappy ragtime tune, the song's lyrics also cleverly contain an obvious double entendre that has certainly contributed to its lasting popularity.

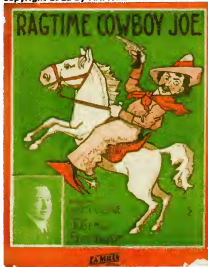
"The Oceana Roll" Lyrics by Roger Lewis and Music by Lucien Denni
Copyright 1911 by Jerome H. Remick & Co.



It is strangely fitting that "The Oceana Roll," one of the greatest ragtime songs, which tells the tale of a shipboard pianist was written by a Frenchman. Lucien Denni (1886-1947) was born in Nancy, France, but soon thereafter rolled his way across the ocean toward the New World where he made his fame and fortune both as a pianist in vaudeville and night club orchestras and as a composer. The lyricist, Roger Lewis (1885-1948) was born in Colfax, Illinois.

"Ragtime Cowboy Joe" Lyrics by Grant Clarke and Music by Lewis F. Muir and Maurice Abrahams

Copyright 1912 by F.A. Mills



"Ragtime Cowboy Joe" was penned by three of Tin Pan Alley's top tunesmiths. Composer Lewis F. Muir (1884-1950) was a ragtime pianist who performed at honky tonks in St. Louis on 1904 and in New York City in 1910. He was also an acclaimed performer in London. Grant Clarke (1891-1931) began his working career as an actor in stock companies, but soon found himself working as a staff writer at a variety of music publishing firms. In addition to a steady outpouring of popular songs, Clarke also wrote specialty material for Bert Williams, Fanny Crise, Eva Tanguay, Nora Bayes, and Al Jolson. Maurice Abrahams (1883-1931) was a charter member of ASCAP, who, in addition to writing songs, was a professional manager of music publishing companies who eventually founded his own publishing firm. "Ragtime Cowboy Joe" was a success when it first appeared in 1912, but it too had a great future in store when Alice Faye sang the song in the 20th Century Fox film Hello, Frisco, Hello in 1943. Betty Hutton also gave the song her best shot in the 20th Century Fox film Incendiary Blonde, a "bio-pic" about the life of boisterous entertainer Texas Guinan. "Ragtime Cowboy Joe" is also the fight song for the University of Wyoming Cowboys.

"Row, Row, Row" Lyrics by William Jerome and Music by Jimmie V. Monaco
Copyright 1912 by Harry Von Tilzer Music Publishing Co.



"Row, Row, Row" was the most popular song featured in the 1912 edition of the Ziegfeld Follies and was introduced by the charming Miss Elizabeth Brice. The song's lyricist, William Jerome (1865-1932), is best known for his enduring 1910 hit "Chinatown My Chinatown." James Vincent Monaco (1885-1945) was born in Fonia, Italy, but immigrated to Albany, New York when he was six. He worked as a ragtime player in Chicago before moving to New York. Monaco's first successful song "Oh, You Circus Day" was featured in the 1912 Broadway revue Hanky Panky. Perhaps his best remembered song is "You Made Me Love You (I Didn't Want to Do It)" introduced by Al Jolson in 1913 and performed by Judy Garland with revised lyrics as "Dear Mr. Gable" in 1937. Monaco worked with a number of lyricists before moving to Hollywood where he teamed with lyricist Johnny Burke to produce songs for several Bing Crosby films.

"Snookey Ookums" Lyrics and Music by Irving Berlin
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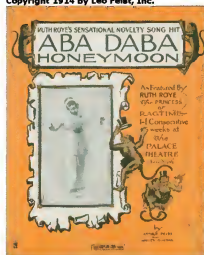
Irving Berlin made light of the challenges of apartment living in his classic "Snookey Ookums," which humorously address the thin-walled construction typical of cheap New York apartment houses of the early twentieth century. Although there were many recordings made of this song, the best may well be the comic duet by Arthur Collins and Byron G. Harlan, preserved on Edison Blue Amberol (1796). Irving Berlin himself performed "Snookey Ookums" to great acclaim in the summer of 1913 in the British revue *Hullo, Ragtime!* on the stage of London's Hippodrome Theatre.

"That International Rag" Lyrics and Music by Irving Berlin
 Copyright 1913 by Waterson, Berlin & Snyder Co.



Again, we find Irving Berlin writing a legendary hit song that would be revived many years after its initial success. Billy Murray may have made the best recording of this song in 1913 (2078: Edison Blue Amberol), but Ethel Merman belted it out in the 20th Century Fox's 1953 film version of Irving Berlin's hit Broadway musical *Call Me Madam*. Alice Faye sang it with captivating charm in Alexander's *Ragtime* Band.

"Aba Daba Honeymoon" Lyrics and Music by Arthur Fields and Walter Donovan
 Copyright 1914 by Leo Feist, Inc.



Known for its unwavering devotion to exploiting fads, Tin Pan Alley's craze for monkey songs reached a fevered pitch in 1914 when vaudeville favorite Ruth Royce thrilled audiences at New York's Palace Theatre with what is arguably the best monkey song ever written, "Aba Daba Honeymoon." The lead author was

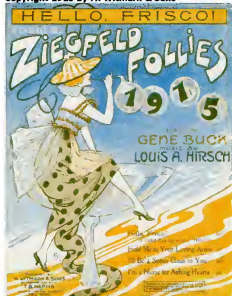
Arthur Fields (1886-1953), who was a favorite on the Vaudeville stage and a prolific recording star. "Aba Daba Honeymoon" was revived in the 1950 MGM film *Two Weeks With Love*, soon followed by the release of a popular Debbie Reynolds and Carleton Carpenter MGM record (30282), earning Fields around \$10,000 in royalty fees in 1951. The song was first popularized on records made in late 1914 by Collins and Hartan (Victor 17620, Edison Diamond Disc 50192, Blue Amberol 2468).

"I Want To Go Back To Michigan" Lyrics and Music by Irving Berlin
Copyright 1914 by Waterson, Berlin & Snyder Co.



"I Want To Go Back To Michigan" is a charming Irving Berlin song that perfectly illustrates one of the predominant themes in Tin Pan Alley songwriting: "The Homesick Urbanized Rube." Starting in the nineteenth century, the steady exodus of job-seeking young men from rural areas to urban centers, especially the big industrialized East Coast cities, was a notable demographic phenomenon. Presumably, these young men were unhappy with city life and longed for the bucolic life they left behind. Tin Pan Alley responded to this sociological situation by churning out thousands of songs that addressed it directly. Irving Berlin's 1914 masterpiece was a hit in its day and was also charmingly reintroduced to America by Judy Garland in MGM's 1948 classic *Easter Parade*.

"Hello, Frisco!" Lyrics by Gene Buck and Music by Louis A. Hirsch
Copyright 1915 by M. Witmark & Sons



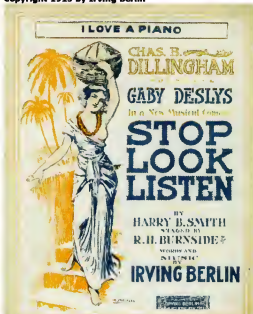
Celebrating the new transcontinental telephone hookup, "Hello, Frisco!" proved that new technologies could be a boon to romance. Situated at the New Amsterdam Theatre, the 1915 Ziegfeld Follies featured sets by Joseph Urban. The opening sequence had showgirls "swimming" in waves of blue light, and massive golden elephants spouting real water through their upturned trunks. For the "Hello, Frisco!" number, chorus girls appeared in costume as various cities now connected through the miracle of modern technology. The song's composer, Louis Achille Hirsch (1881-1924) began his career as a staff composer for the Shuberts, but by 1915 was enough of a success for Florenz Ziegfeld to invite him to contribute a score for the Ziegfeld Follies. Lyricist Gene Buck was one of Ziegfeld's staff writers and also worked as a sheet music cover artist. "Hello, Frisco!" instantly became the hit song of the 1915 Ziegfeld Follies. In 1943, the song became a hit once again when it was featured by Alice Faye in the lavish Twentieth Century-Fox Technicolor musical *Hello, Frisco, Hello*.

"If You Only Had My Disposition" Lyrics by Charles McCarron and Music by Albert Von Tilzer
Copyright 1915 by Broadway Music Corporation



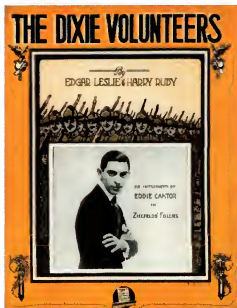
This wonderfully naughty song, "If You Only Had My Disposition," could well have been written with Vaudeville star Eva Tanguay in mind because it perfectly captures her saucy stage persona. One of the best early recordings of the song was a duet by Sam Ash and Edith Chapman on Columbia (A1868). Albert and Harry Von Tilzer (1878-1956) dominated Tin Pan Alley during the first two decades of the twentieth century. In addition to countless other hits, Albert's 1908 song "Take Me Out To The Ball Game" captured the heart of the nation and established him as a megastar in the popular music realm. Charles Russell McCarron (1891-1919) was prolific composer, a cartoonist, a pianist, and a Vaudeville singer. He spent most of his musical career gainfully employed as a staff composer at Albert Von Tilzer's Broadway Music Corporation. He is best remembered today for the 1919 jazz standard "Blues My Naughty Sweetie Gives To Me," which hit the music racks after his untimely death on 27 January 1919.

"I Love A Piano" Lyrics and Music by Irving Berlin
Copyright 1915 by Irving Berlin



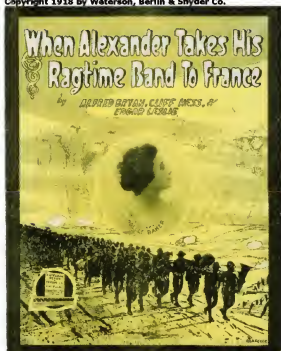
"I Love A Piano," one of Irving Berlin's best songs, was first performed by Harry Fox and ensemble as the finale to act one in Irving Berlin's big stage production *Stop! Look! Listen!*, which opened at the Globe Theatre in New York in late December 1915. Marion Davies, the great film star of the 1920s and 1930s, made one of her earliest stage appearances in the show. The song was charmingly revived by Fred Astaire and Judy Garland in the spectacular 1948 MGM film *Easter Parade*.

"The Dixie Volunteers" Lyrics and Music by Edgar Leslie and Harry Ruby
Copyright 1917 by Waterson, Berlin & Snyder Co.



In 1917, as the United States appeared headed to join the war, patriotic sentiments ran high. Eddie Cantor introduced a snappy war song into the Ziegfeld Follies that became quite popular. "The Dixie Volunteers" was written by the song writing team of Edgar Leslie (1885-1976) and Harry Ruby (1895-1959). Tin Pan Alley responded to World War I by pumping out thousands of songs that fell into just a few broad categories. "The Dixie Volunteers" is a "volunteer" song, which invariably revolved around the military contributions of southerners and Blacks. Other notable songs of this genre are "The Mississippi Volunteers" (1917) by Levinson and Cobb, and "The Ragtime Volunteers Are Off To War" (1917) by MacDonald and Hanley. These songs are snappy songs that advocate the idea that Black American soldiers sent to Europe would win the war by just being themselves and singing their native Dixieland songs.

**"When Alexander Takes His Ragtime Band To France" Lyrics and Music by Alfred Bryan, Cliff Hess, and Edgar Leslie
Copyright 1918 by Waterson, Berlin & Snyder Co.**



"When Alexander Takes His Ragtime Band To France" is certainly one of the most enjoyable World War I songs, most especially because it continues the saga of the mythical band leader "Alexander" popularized by Irving Berlin in 1911. There were many songs about Alexander, but this one is especially fun because of its suggestion that the sound of American ragtime would make the German soldiers lay down their guns and start dancing together on the battlefield "like picannies." This is a play on the same theme espoused by Irving Berlin in "That International Rag." American song writers obviously were very impressed with their abilities and were confident that they would transform the world through ragtime.

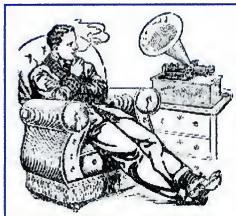
**"Sahara (We'll Soon Be Dry Like You)" Lyrics by Alfred Bryan and Music by Jean Schwartz
Copyright 1919 by Jerome H. Remick & Co.**



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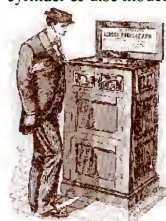
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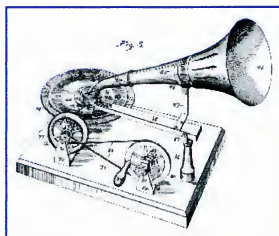
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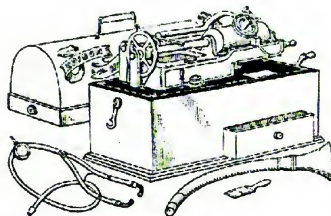


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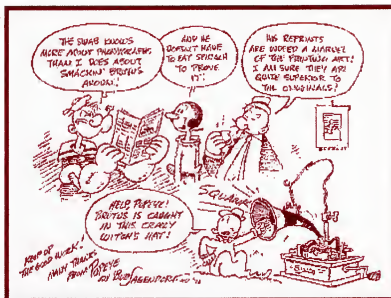
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